

Executive Summary of the City of Atlanta's 2000-2004 Consolidated Plan For the 2004 Annual Action Plan

Prepared by the City of Atlanta
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Introduction

Atlanta is a major regional center for the southeastern United States, the focal point for international activity, and the hub of a twenty-county metropolitan area. It is also the home of Georgia's capitol and the regional headquarters for the federal government.

The vision for the City of Atlanta in the years ahead is that of a city which seizes unique opportunities and shapes itself to meet the needs of the next generation. It is a vision that works to create a more humane, safe, and enjoyable place to live, work, and raise children. It is a vision that raises the quality and productivity of the lives of all its citizens. It is a vision of communities that includes diversity in age, race and economic status, in which people can remain throughout their lives, because these communities are flexible enough to meet the residents' changing needs.

The Planning Process

The Comprehensive Development Plan

The City of Atlanta is committed to planning by inclusion. The City is an active participant in planning groups and forums throughout the metropolitan area, and is a catalyst for continuous interaction and connectivity in its citizens' lives. Citizens, groups, and interests are represented through the City's many opportunities for active participation in the planning process. The City compiles the knowledge, goals and objectives derived from this planning process into the annual Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP). The CDP provides guidance for the City in the revitalization and strengthening of its residential neighborhoods and business communities, setting forth comprehensive development goals, policies, and objectives for the entire City and its 24 individual Neighborhood Planning Units and 12 political districts.

The Five-Year Consolidated Plan

Atlanta's Consolidated Plan is an addendum to the CDP. The Consolidated Plan is that part of the CDP that describes the City's needs, goals and strategies relative to the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development programs funded under the Consolidated Plan: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME), Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG), and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA). This summary offers citizens an overview of the 5-year Consolidated Plan, covering the years 2000 to 2004.

Development of the Consolidated Plan

The Consolidated Plan process is a component of the City's comprehensive planning process. Preparation of the Consolidated Plan begins in conjunction with the City's CDP citizen participation process in January of each year. The annual Consolidated Plan process continues with an application process starting in the first part of the year, comprehensive proposal reviews and citizen input through the summer months, Executive Branch recommendations in early fall, followed by a public hearing and adoption by the Atlanta City Council. The Consolidated Plan is adopted as a fourth quarter amendment to the Comprehensive Development Plan.

The development of an Affordable Housing Strategy for the 2000-2004 Consolidated Plan began in December 1998 when the City contracted with the Atlanta Outreach Consortium (AOC), a research/planning consortium of universities operating through the Georgia Tech Research Corporation. AOC conducted an

affordable housing needs assessment, prepared technical analyses of obstacles to affordable housing production, inventoried multiple forms of assisted housing, estimated the extent of substandard housing, analyzed the feasibility of instituting a housing trust fund, documented new additions to the housing stock, organized and convened a participatory Affordable Housing Advisory Committee, facilitated public input at monthly meetings of the Atlanta Housing Forum, and made recommendations for housing initiatives for the 2000-2004 Consolidated Plan.

Planning for homeless assistance is also a significant part of the Consolidated Plan process. Identifying needs and viable strategies to address homelessness is an ongoing process that involves local governments, non-profit homeless service providers, and other interested parties including charitable foundations, religious organizations, and business and community groups. In Atlanta, the Homeless Action Group, or HAG, was founded in the mid-1990s to provide an open discussion forum for the issues, policies, strategies and actions that impact people who are homeless. The monthly HAG meetings are widely advertised and are open to all interested persons.

HAG has facilitated several significant local collaborations, including the Metro Atlanta Tri-Jurisdictional Collaborative on Homelessness, a planning process encompassing the three most urban of the Atlanta area's local governments: the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, and DeKalb County. Also, in the fall of 2002, Mayor Shirley Franklin spearheaded the formation of a Commission on Homelessness, to develop a plan of action for addressing homelessness in Atlanta. The Commission has produced a ten-year plan and has identified seven priority projects for implementation in the plan's first phase.

The Consolidated Plan also covers the needs of persons living with HIV/AIDS. In June 1997, the City of Atlanta HOPWA Program contracted with AIDS Housing of Washington to conduct an HIV/AIDS housing needs assessment, facilitate community-wide planning meetings and produce the region's first *Atlanta EMSA HIV/AIDS Housing Plan*. The assessment and planning process took approximately twelve months and involved persons living with HIV/AIDS, homeless providers, HIV/AIDS housing and services providers and advocates, HOPWA local/state participating governments, Metro-Atlanta HIV Health Services Planning Council members and health districts within the 20-county EMSA. The *Atlanta EMSA HIV/AIDS Housing Plan* and *HIV/AIDS Housing Standards of Care* were adopted by the HIV Health Services Planning Council in November of 1998, and are a part of the 2000-2004 Consolidated Plan. The City of Atlanta continues to coordinate with the Metro Atlanta HIV Health Services Planning Council and metropolitan counties to address the needs of people living with HIV/AIDS.

Community Profile

The City of Atlanta overlaps portions of the counties of Fulton and DeKalb. In 1990, the U.S. Census reported that the City had lost 17% of its population to urban counties. The 1990 population for the City was 415,200. According to the 2000 U. S. Census, Atlanta's population in 2000 was 416,474, or only slightly more than its 1990 population. This seemingly stable population figure is misleading, for during that last decade of the 20th century the City underwent some significant changes. According to the National Data Planning Corporation, 1995 average household income in Atlanta was \$47,630 for 1995, but more than half of the households in the City of Atlanta had extremely low incomes, or earned less than 30% of HUD's 1998 area median of \$54,700. Altogether, 33.6% of the City's population was at or below the poverty rate in 1998.

Dilapidated privately owned City housing units were demolished between 1990 and 2000, and many public housing units were reconfigured in complexes through selective demolitions and new construction to emerge as a part of mixed income communities. New town home and upper-income housing development also occurred in several areas of the City, along with loft developments in close-in and inner-city areas, which brought in higher-income households. According to the 2000 Census, average household income in the City increased to \$64,307.

The ethnic composition of Atlanta also changed from 1990 to 2000, with a decrease in the percentage of African Americans and other minorities from 73% in 1990 to 66% in 2000. The largest racial group was African-Americans at 62% of the total population. Asian-Americans made up roughly 2% of the population, while various other racial groups were less than 1% each. Although the Atlanta area has seen a significant increase in minority groups, especially Latinos and Asians, many of these new residents have settled in suburban communities rather than in the City itself.

Geographic Focus for the Consolidated Plan

The Community Development Impact Area (CDIA) is comprised of City of Atlanta census block groups with annual household incomes at or below 80% of the area median annual income comprise the Community Development Impact Area (CDIA), as shown in the attached map (based on 2000 U. S. Census data). The CDIA changed slightly in 2003 based on 2000 Census data. Activities taking place in these areas may be eligible for grant funding as area-benefit or direct benefit, depending on the nature of the project. Projects that impact low and moderate income Atlantans may also take place outside the CDIA. The large majority of CDBG, ESG and HOME funded activities take place within the CDIA, but the City's housing programs are generally open to low and moderate-income citizens throughout the City. The HOPWA program funds activities throughout the metro-Atlanta area. It is the policy of the HOPWA program to provide resources to enable persons living with HIV/AIDS to access resources in the jurisdictions in which they live, to the extent possible.

Affordable Housing Needs and the City's Priorities

I. Housing Market Conditions

According to the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) *1998 Population and Housing Report*, Atlanta had 186,306 housing units in 1998, 90% of which were occupied and 10% vacant. Average household size in 1998 was estimated at 2.36 persons. Housing values in the City have steadily increased since 1990. In 1998 the median value of a home in the City was \$109,000 (a 54% increase compared to \$71,200 in 1990), and the median rent was \$712 monthly (a 108% increase compared to \$342 in 1990).

According to 1990 U. S. Census figures, 60% of the City's households had low or very low income, with one-third of Atlanta households earning less than \$15,000 annually. Based on the 2000 Census, 24% of the City's households still earned less than \$15,000 annually. HUD estimated the median household income increased from \$22,275 to \$54,700 (a 145.6% increase) between 1990 and 1998. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates Atlanta's unemployment rate for 1998 was 3.2% compared to 7.2% for 1990. However, 33.6% of the City's population was at or below the poverty rate, and a 1997 report by Research Atlanta estimated that 11,000 individuals were homeless at any given time in Atlanta.

While Atlanta's housing stock is generally old, 80% of the units are in standard condition, i.e. meet local codes. Over one-half (56.3%) of the City's occupied units are rental; just over two in five (43%) units are owner occupied. ARC estimated that the number of occupied housing units in Atlanta increased from 155,752 to 167,977 (a 7.8% increase) during the period from 1990 to 1998, and the percent of vacant units declined from 14.8% to 9.8%. The percentage increase of owner-occupied units was 9.4% from 67,159 units in 1990 to 78,473 units in 2000. Nearly three quarters (74%) of the new additions to stock were rental units and over one-half of all new units were located in Buckhead. One-half (50%) of the new rental units are studio or one-bedroom units. Rents on the north side of the City were the highest in the region (\$864).

There has been less single-family than multi-family construction in Atlanta in the 1990's. Between 1990 and 1998 in the City of Atlanta 3,326 single-family units as opposed to 9,601 multi-family units were produced. Because the affordability problem is, first and foremost, one of renters, new market rate single-family home construction often does not address this problem. Furthermore, considerable demolition of single-family

homes also occurred in the 1990's, much of it related to the Olympic Games. In the 1990s, 6,000 single-family units were demolished.

Between 1990 and 2000, 13,258 housing units were added to the housing stock. In 1990, there were 81,905 single-family units and 92,800 multi-family units. In 2000, there were 88,905 single-family units and 98,903 multi-family units. In addition, 10,900 loft units have been developed over the past five years. Most of these units, however, are not affordable housing units. The median price of a new single-family unit increased from \$109,000 in 1990 to \$130,000 in 2000, while the average rent increased from \$442 in 1990 to \$606 in 2000.

The City's successful in-town neighborhood revitalization initiatives have resulted in the rehabilitation of many old homes and have significantly increased the housing market value in those areas. The conversion of light commercial buildings into loft developments has emerged to create a popular type of housing, located near Atlanta's central business district and rapid transit lines. These developments offer housing suitable for middle and upper income households, but affordable housing is scarce and the supply appears to be diminishing.

An analysis is underway in the fall of 2003 to examine 2000 Census housing information. This analysis will be incorporated into the next five-year plan, which will cover the period from 2005-2009.

II. Housing Needs

The Atlanta Outreach Consortium *1998 Affordable Housing Needs Assessment* projected that 63,392 (37.1%) of Atlanta households with incomes less than 95% of the area median family income would have housing problems in the year 2000, and predicted that a larger percentage of the City's households would experience housing problems in five years. Renters would be nearly three (2.7) times more likely to have housing problems than owners. The assessment further projected that black households would be disproportionately affected by housing problems, that Blacks would represent 85% of over-crowded renter households and 72% of households with a housing cost-burden. This study stated that affordability was the primary problem for households in substandard housing conditions and that women were more likely to live in substandard housing conditions. The median age of renters with housing problems was found to be 36.6 years and the largest single group was between 30-39 years old. The single largest group of homeowners with housing problems was age 60 and older; but the median age for homeowners with housing problems was 48.6 years old. Two-thirds of households with housing problems were in the labor force.

The AOC *Housing Needs Assessment* estimated that 46,993 (49.4%) of all renter households in 1998 paid 30% or more of their monthly income for housing expenses, and an estimated 16,153 (22.1%) of all owner-occupied households with a mortgage or loan in 1998 paid 30% or more for housing expenses. Over nine thousand (9,197) of the City's renters lived in overcrowded households, with more than one person per room, typically in smaller apartments or single-family homes, and 3,009 owner-occupied households had more than one person per room. They believed that most of the new multi-family housing units built or planned for the City of Atlanta would probably be financially out of reach for low-to-moderate income residents. The report concluded that the production of new affordable rental units had not kept up with demand.

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Public and Assisted Housing Needs: The AOC *Assessments of the City of Atlanta's Affordable Housing Inventory* stated, "twenty percent (35,045 units) of Atlanta's total housing stock, or one out of five units, is affordable (to low-income households) and subsidized by public support. The great majority of this stock is concentrated in the older sections of the city, in areas with predominately African-American populations and high concentrations of poverty. The report predicted that over the next five years, over one half of Atlanta's assisted inventory would become vulnerable to loss of affordability." The report stated that there was a long waiting list for public and assisted housing in the City of Atlanta.

Special Population Housing Needs: The supply of supportive housing for persons with special needs in Atlanta is minimal and inadequate. Long-term and permanent facilities are needed for the elderly, frail elderly and persons with physical disabilities. Supportive housing programs are needed for persons with developmental disabilities, mental illness, substance addictions, and HIV/AIDS. Such facilities should include transitional housing, single-room occupancy units, and residential treatment facilities for the chronically mentally ill and the terminally ill. Health and social services are needed for all supportive housing facilities.

III. Barriers to Affordable Housing

The Atlanta Outreach Consortium conducted a survey in August 1999 to identify “affordable housing obstacles and solutions.” Forty experts in the field considered the following areas as needing policy revisions, and/or being barriers and threats to new and existing affordable housing:

- Land prices have been increasing in the inner city, making it increasingly difficult to find large tracts of land that can support affordable housing.
- The provision of most affordable multi-family housing is through renovation of existing units; however, there are fewer suitable units of the appropriate scale available for renovation for affordable housing. For those complexes that do exist, prices are going up.
- The opposition of residents to additional apartment complexes and housing for the very low income.
- Given construction costs, truly affordable housing requires subsidies, which are limited and require complex coordination and scheduling among various funding sources.
- Timing and coordination of permitting, building codes, funding sources, demolition liens, insurable titles, and zoning issues.
- While there is general consensus that most for-profit developers have more capacity than non-profits, most for-profit developers are not likely to be involved in affordable housing in the City.
- The upgrading and preservation of existing single-family housing is difficult due to the risk and costs involved and the limitations on the use of most funds.
- Inadequate venture capital.
- Reluctance of financial institutions to finance multi-family development and housing for special needs populations, particularly if they are to be located in low-income neighborhoods.

Housing issues/barriers were studied further by the City Council’s Gentrification Task Force and in 2001, the City adopted the goal of two-thirds of public subsidies for affordable housing to be targeted to reach extremely low-income families (30% or less of area median income).

IV. Housing Priorities and Objectives

- Improve the existing housing stock
 - a) Assist extremely low and very low income persons living in substandard rental units by making low and no cost loans for acquisition and rehabilitation of multi-family units to CHDO’s, nonprofit, and private developers.
 - b) Assist low and very low-income homeowners living in substandard single-family units by making rehabilitation grants available.
 - c) Address health and safety problems (i.e. roof leaks, broken furnaces, failing plumbing) for low and very low-income homeowners through provision of emergency assistance grants.
- Increase affordable housing opportunities
 - a) Assist low and moderate-income persons with home-ownership through down-payment assistance and second mortgage subsidies.
 - b) Support the development of new affordable housing (i.e. the acquisition and rehabilitation of existing housing units or construction of new units.
- Support neighborhood preservation and development

- a) Aggressively enforce the City's Housing Code.
 - b) Support demolition of dilapidated structures.
 - c) Support housing programs in conjunction with other neighborhood development efforts.
 - d) Coordinate with other programs that provide housing rehabilitation resources, including the Atlanta Housing Authority, the Renewable Communities, and other governmental, non-profit and private resources.
- Support other affordable housing initiatives
 - a) Support at least one new/expanded project per year to increase housing opportunities for persons with special needs.
 - b) Support efforts to provide equal access to credit and fair housing programs for low and moderate-income citizens.

Homeless Assistance

I. Homeless Needs

The spring 2003 homeless census conducted for the Metro Atlanta Tri-Jurisdictional Collaborative on Homelessness found 6,956 persons homeless on the night of the census. Over 85% of the Tri-Jurisdictional homeless, or 5,927 persons, were in the City of Atlanta.

3-12-2003 Tri-Jurisdictional Collaborative Homeless Census: Population by Jurisdiction, by %

Jurisdiction	# Unshel.	% of Unshel.	# Shel.	% of Shel.	Total	% of Total
City of Atlanta	1,943	90.2	3,984	82.9	5,927	85.2%
Balance DeKalb	126	5.9	587	12.2	713	10.3%
Balance Fulton	84	3.9	232	4.8	316	4.5%
Totals	2,153	100.0	4,803	99.9	6,956	100.0%

The Tri-Jurisdiction's current Gaps Analysis shows an unmet need of approximately 1,964 beds for homeless individuals and approximately 25 beds for persons in families with children.

II. Homeless Priorities and Objectives

The City's direct grant funding for homeless-assistance programs is a part of an extensive mix of resources, including support from county, State, HUD grants, local charitable institutions, private donors and volunteers. In conjunction with all these resources, the City's current level of funding supports programs that provide over 550 beds and over 300 supportive services, on a daily basis. These programs are an essential part of the existing inventory of services, which the City is working to preserve. In addition, the City is working cooperatively to encourage expanded housing and services options for the homeless throughout the metro area.

The following homeless assistance objectives for the 2000-2004 Consolidated Plan are based primarily on pre-existing regional planning work, particularly the efforts of the Homeless Action Group, and the Tri-Jurisdictional Collaborative on the Continuum of Care. These efforts reflect the regional nature and impact of the homeless problem, and the need to work collaboratively with a broad range of concerned partners in crafting solutions.

- Support continuing operations of well-run residential programs meeting existing needs, and give priority funding to those serving special need sub-populations.
- Support options for housing homeless families, for sheltering the difficult-to-serve chronic homeless, and for providing supportive post-treatment housing for persons in recovery.
- Support programs that provide critical support services directed to decreasing obstacles to stabilization for homeless persons.

- Support appropriate collaborations between residential and service programs and meaningful linkages among service providers for efficient use of resources, more effective service delivery, and improved data collection.
- Participate in efforts to define performance guidelines and service models that appear most effective in meeting the needs of the homeless.
- Support programs which include aftercare services for previously homeless persons and families still at risk.

Other Community Development Needs

I. Community Development Needs

Although the Consolidated Plan emphasizes programs which provide affordable housing opportunities and assistance for the homeless and those living with HIV/AIDS, this Plan also recognizes that there are other needs which impact the health and vitality of its neighborhoods and impact significantly upon the lives of City of Atlanta residents. In addition to housing, this Plan also includes programs that support economic development, community revitalization, and social service support. The City is committed to the development of neighborhoods that provide a cross-generational living environment that provides opportunities for diversity in a civic and civil community.

The City has identified neighborhoods where economic development is lagging behind and opportunities for shopping and employment are limited. Needed inducements to development include improvements to the public infrastructure and financial and technical assistance to encourage business growth. New job opportunities within the central city are limited, and employment opportunities are geared increasingly toward a more educated job force. Low-income Atlantans need assistance to improve their employability and also additional entry-level jobs accessible to those with limited job skills.

The City has significant needs related to infrastructure improvements (drainage, streets, sidewalks), and public facilities (community centers, parks and recreation facilities). Much of the existing infrastructure is aging and inadequate by current standards. Shifting population patterns and changing neighborhood demographics have resulted in an imbalance between the needs of residential areas for public and community facilities, and the type, location, and number of facilities currently in place. Many of the needed improvements are beyond the scope of the limited grant resources available under this Plan, but eligible low-income communities are prioritized for grant assistance.

Neighborhood revitalization requires a comprehensive approach to also address the supportive services that enable families and individuals to meet basic life needs and improve their quality of life. Atlanta's demographics show several indicators of increased need for social services. Its population is shifting towards the older end of the age spectrum, compared to the metropolitan area and national averages, it has a disproportionate number of single-parent families, and over one-third of its households live in poverty.

II. Community Development Priorities and Objectives

General

- Utilize strategies that encourage the linkage of resources, including such entities as the Atlanta Housing Authority, the Atlanta Development Authority, the Atlanta Empowerment Zone and other federal funding programs.
- Create and expand economic development opportunities to foster the leveraging of public funds with private investments.
- Promote balanced growth through collaborations and partnerships with established service providers so as to address poverty, job creation, and provision of services for special needs populations.

Economic Development

- Support the creation of permanent, private-sector jobs for low/moderate income persons.
- Support the revitalization of commercial areas that serve low/moderate income persons.
- Provide job training, employment readiness, and placement assistance for unemployed and under-employed residents.

Public Infrastructure and Community Facilities

- Support new or expanded facilities in low/moderate-income areas which are significantly under-served.
- Support improvements to existing facilities in low/moderate-income areas where necessary to maintain or achieve adequate service levels.
- Address serious deficiencies in existing infrastructure.

Social Services

- Support social service programs that provide basic life needs.
- Support programs that provide or facilitate access to basic life needs.
- Support programs that enable people to remain in their homes to prevent homelessness and institutionalization of persons with special needs.

Annual Action Plan for 2004

The 2004 Annual Action Plan includes activities funded under the CDBG, HOME, HOPWA and ESG programs. Below are highlights for each of these grants.

Community Development Block Grant

Housing

- CHRC Emergency Home Repair - Emergency home repairs for elderly/disabled homeowners (citywide)
- Habitat for Humanity - acquisition of sites to construct single-family homes (citywide)

Homeless Facilities

- Genesis Shelter – acquisition of property to relocate family shelter (citywide)

Social Services

- Chestnut Ridge Apartments – transitional housing for homeless mothers with children (citywide)
- Families First Group Home for Girls- group home with intensive services for adolescent females (citywide)
- Predatory Mortgage Defense Project- legal services to seniors subject to predatory mortgage lending (citywide)

Job Training

- Achor Jobs Development – vocational referrals for homeless women (citywide)
- Community Based Services/Bobby Dodd – employment services for severely disabled persons (citywide)

Economic Development

- ACCION Investing in Atlanta – micro loan assistance for small businesses (Fairlie-Poplar, West End, Little Five Points, Atlanta University, Sweet Auburn)

Environmental/Community Facilities

- Georgia Avenue Neighborhood Facility – safety/security-related improvements in City-owned neighborhood facility (Summerhill)
- Oakland City Bathhouse – reconstruction bathhouse at neighborhood pool (Oakland City)

Planning and Administration

- Pathways – data system to coordinate homeless service agencies (citywide)

HOME Investment Partnership

- HDDC Rehab. - acquisition and renovation of single-family homes (MLK historic district)

Emergency Shelter Grant

- Transitional Housing for Ex-Offenders – leased transitional beds for ex-offenders in recovery treatment (citywide)

Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS

- Action Ministries HOPWA Program- leasing costs for 6 houses w/ support services and emergency assistance (Spalding, Carroll Counties)
- Jerusalem House Scattered Site Housing- permanent housing for medically fragile homeless persons (metro-wide)
- Travelers Aid Emergency/Transitional Housing Program - transitional housing for families (metro-wide)

To comment on Atlanta's Consolidated Plan, please contact Grants Management at
404-330-6112 (phone) or 404-658-6249 (fax)